

# THE MINERAL INDUSTRIES OF CAMEROON AND CAPE VERDE

By Omayra Bermúdez-Lugo

## CAMEROON

Cameroon is a West African country that borders the innermost bay of the Gulf of Guinea between Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria. The petroleum sector was the most significant segment of Cameroon's mineral industry. Other mineral commodities produced in the country were cement, clay, limestone, marble, pozzolana, primary aluminum, and sand, and modest amounts of diamond and gold in placer deposits. A variety of industrial minerals and other construction materials, such as aggregates, gypsum, and stone, are also produced. Cameroon's undeveloped mineral resources include bauxite, cobalt, diamond, gold in lode deposits, granite, iron ore, nepheline syenite, nickel, and rutile.

The Ministère des Mines de l'Eau et de l'Energie was responsible for the administration of the mineral industry in accordance with the Mining Law of 2001 and the Petroleum Code of 2000. Compagnie Camérounaise de l'Aluminium (Alucam), which was owned by Alcan Inc. of Canada and the Government of Cameroon (46.7% each) operated a primary aluminum smelter and a rolling mill at Edea. In 2005, Alcan signed a Letter of Intent with the Government of Cameroon to increase its primary aluminum smelter capacity to 260,000 metric tons per year (t/yr) from its actual capacity of 90,000 t/yr and to construct a new hydroelectric powerplant. The estimated cost of the project, which was scheduled to be completed by 2010, was \$900 million (Alcan Inc., 2005; Republic of Cameroon Prime Minister's Office, 2005<sup>1</sup>). Cimenteries du Cameroun operated two cement plants. Numerous local operations produced industrial minerals. State-owned Société Nationale des Hydrocarbures (SNH) was involved in hydrocarbon exploration and production with various joint-venture partners, including Addax Petroleum Cameroon Ltd., Amerada Hess Corp., ChevronTexaco Corp., Exxon Mobil Corp., Fusion Oil and Gas NL, Petronas Carigali Overseas Sdh. Bhd., Total S.A., and Tullow Oil plc.

Small-scale artisanal miners recovered gold in the eastern and northern parts of the country. Annual gold production was estimated to be about 1,500 kilograms. Diamond was also produced throughout the country by small-scale artisanal miners. The country's petroleum reserves were located offshore in the Rio del Rey Basin, offshore and onshore in the Douala and Kribi-Camp Basins, and onshore in the Logone-Birni Basin in the northern part of the country. Cameroon's only refinery, which is located in the port city of Limbe, was operated by Société Nationale de Raffinage.

More-extensive coverage of the mineral industry of Cameroon can be found in the 2003 and 2004 U.S. Geological Survey Minerals Yearbook, volume III, Area Reports—International—Africa and The Middle East, which are available on the World Wide Web at URL <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/country>.

## Reference Cited

Alcan Inc., 2005, Alcan and Cameroon Government sign Letter of Intent for potential further development of joint-venture: Montreal, Quebec, Canada, Alcan Inc. press release, October 26, 2 p.

## Internet Reference Cited

Republic of Cameroon Prime Minister's Office, 2005, Aluminum upgrade under study between ALCAN and Cameroon, accessed April 14, 2006, at URL [http://www.spm.gov.cm/detail\\_art.php?id\\_art=859&type=simpl&lang=en](http://www.spm.gov.cm/detail_art.php?id_art=859&type=simpl&lang=en).

## CAPE VERDE

Cape Verde is an archipelago of 10 islands and 8 islets located about 600 kilometers off the western coast of Africa. Mining plays a minor role in the country's economy. Production of mineral commodities is limited to the production of clay on the islands of Boa Vista, Sal, and Sao Vicente; gypsum on the island of Maio; limestone on the islands of Boa Vista, Sal, and Santo Antao; pozzolana on the island of Santo Antao; and salt on the islands of Mindelo and Sal. Cape Verde is not a petroleum producer.

More-extensive coverage of the mineral industry of Cape Verde can be found in the 2003 and 2004 U.S. Geological Survey Minerals Yearbook, volume III, Area Reports—International—Africa and The Middle East, which are available on the World Wide Web at URL <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/country>.

---

<sup>1</sup>A reference that includes a section mark (§) is found in the Internet Reference Cited section.

TABLE 1  
CAMEROON AND CAPE VERDE: PRODUCTION OF MINERAL COMMODITIES<sup>1</sup>

(Metric tons unless otherwise specified)

Commodity <sup>2</sup>	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005 <sup>c</sup>
<b>CAMEROON</b>					
Aluminum metal, primary	80,900 <sup>3</sup>	67,000	77,200	85,900 <sup>3</sup>	90,400 <sup>3</sup>
Cement, hydraulic	980,433 <sup>r, 4</sup>	936,969 <sup>r, 4</sup>	948,943 <sup>r, 4</sup>	1,032,438 <sup>r, 4</sup>	1,000,000
Clay	22,580 <sup>r, 4</sup>	23,066 <sup>r, 4</sup>	24,881 <sup>r, 4</sup>	25,000 <sup>e, r</sup>	25,000
Diamond carats	4,800 <sup>r, 4</sup>	5,000 <sup>r, 4</sup>	5,500 <sup>r, 4</sup>	12,000	12,000
Gold, mine output, Au content <sup>5</sup> kilograms	600 <sup>r, 4</sup>	700 <sup>r, 4</sup>	700 <sup>r, 4</sup>	1,500	1,500
<b>Petroleum:</b>					
Crude thousand 42-gallon barrels	29,200	26,280 <sup>3</sup>	24,820 <sup>3</sup>	34,675 <sup>3</sup>	21,900 <sup>6</sup>
Refinery products do.	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
Pozzolana, ash for cement	600,000	620,000	600,000	600,000	600,000
Sand and gravel	456,810	556,382	601,201	601,000	601,000
Sapphire kilograms	1,000 <sup>4</sup>	1,000 <sup>4</sup>	1,000 <sup>4</sup>	1,000	1,000
Silica sand	11,165 <sup>4</sup>	12,408 <sup>4</sup>	13,927 <sup>4</sup>	14,000	14,000
<b>Stone:</b>					
Limestone	92,558 <sup>r, 4</sup>	98,600 <sup>r, 4</sup>	103,420 <sup>r, 4</sup>	103,000 <sup>r</sup>	103,000
Marble	420 <sup>r, 4</sup>	445 <sup>r, 4</sup>	468 <sup>r, 4</sup>	500 <sup>e, r</sup>	500
<b>CAPE VERDE<sup>7</sup></b>					
Salt <sup>c</sup>	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600

<sup>c</sup>Estimated; estimated data are rounded to no more than three significant digits. <sup>r</sup>Revised.

<sup>1</sup>Includes data available through March 6, 2006.

<sup>2</sup>In addition to the commodities listed, a variety of industrial minerals and construction materials (aggregate, gypsum, and stone) are produced, and bauxite may be produced, but information is inadequate to make reliable estimates of output. The National Institute of Statistics of Cameroon reports salt production to be less than 1 metric ton per year.

<sup>3</sup>Reported figure.

<sup>4</sup>Reported by the National Institute of Statistics of Cameroon.

<sup>5</sup>From artisanal mining.

<sup>6</sup>Reported by the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

<sup>7</sup>Cape Verde also presumably produced clay, gypsum, limestone, and pozzolana, but output is not reported, and available information is inadequate to make estimates of output levels.